

NEWSLETTER

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chair, Democratic Caucus



(L-R) Robert Friis, President, SCPHA; Billie Weiss, member of the SCPHA governing council; and Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas was named "Legislator of the Year" by the Southern California Public Health Association (SCPHA) for his continuing support of state, local and neighborhood initiatives beneficial to the health and mental health of all

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas Named Southern California Public Health Association's 'Legislator of the Year'

residents of Los Angeles County. The award was bestowed at the SCPHA's 2006 Annual Conference on "Health Disparities Across the Life Span: Problems and Solutions" held at Almansor Court in Alhambra.

Mr. Ridley-Thomas is chair of the Select Committee on the Los Angeles County Healthcare Crisis that has explored deficiencies in the emergency care system and indigent care throughout the county hospital system. He is also a member of the Assembly Committee on Health, and the 16-member

Proposition 63 Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MH-SOAC) which addresses the issues and problems that state and local communities face in treating persons with mental illness and managing the Mental Health care system. From his seat on the MH-SOAC, Mr. Ridley-Thomas did much to educate the Commissioners about the unique mental health service needs of Los Angeles, which resulted in the recent allocation of over \$70 million in Prop 63 funds for L.A. County mental health services.

Ridley-Thomas' 2006 Legislative Program Seeks to Combat Cancer, Extend Voting Rights, and Expand Consumer Safeguards

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas has advanced a major legislative program for 2006 that will have a direct, positive impact on neighborhood quality of life. This article is the first in a two-part series (part two follows in the April newsletter) highlighting Mr. Ridley-Thomas' proposals to improve public safety, voting rights for all citizens, cancer treatment and prevention, healthcare planning and homecare support services.

"Whether it is providing disaster relief tax credits, extending the Voting Rights Act of 1965 or battling colorectal cancer, the substance of the issues I have brought forward in my 2006 Legislative Program will touch nearly every Californian in a positive way. I will be working closely with state elected officials, state agencies, business and labor organizations, health groups, and civil rights advocates to pass these significant measures into law during this Assembly session," Mr. Ridley-Thomas said.

This month's "Distinguished Dozen" Ridley-Thomas bills includes the following:

AB 912 - Disaster Relief Tax Credit Act

Provides a \$100 per person tax credit to Californians who give free housing to persons displaced by a federally qualified natural disaster. It will be retroactive to August 28, 2005 with a five-year sunset. This measure conforms with some modifications to the Federal Katrina Act. State Controller Steve Westly sponsors AB 912.

AB 925 - California Insurance Community Investment Disclosure Act

Requires California insurers to disclose community development investment practices in low and moderate income communities and post them on the Department of Insurance website. Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi and the Department of Insurance sponsor AB 925.

AJR 37 - Voting Rights Act of 1965

Memorializes the Congress and President of the United States to extend the provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act that are set to expire in the year 2007. Asian Americans for Civil Rights and Equality sponsor AJR 37.

AB 2339 - Colorectal Cancer Treatment and Prevention Program (See article on page 2 of this newsletter)

AB 2470 - LA County Health Master Plan

Recommends that the LA County Board of Supervisors create a master plan for health care in LA County. Permits the Board of Supervisors to

assemble a taskforce to develop and report back on long-range planning and policy recommendations for the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services.

AB 2486 - IHSS Provider Fingerprinting Act

Protects In-Home Supportive Service consumers by requiring homecare workers to be fingerprinted. AB 2486 is sponsored by SEIU, Local 434-B.

AB 2494 - IHSS Homecare Workers Professional Development Program

Allows for In-Home Supportive Service providers, some of the lowest paid workers in the state, to receive paid professional development training. AB 2494 is sponsored by SEIU, Local 434-B.

AB 2560 - School-Based Health Centers Clearinghouse Act of 2006

Requires the State Department of Health Services, in cooperation with the State Department of Education, to establish a Public School Health Center Program to create standardized data collection procedures and maintain a database of health information on public school health centers in California, and track health issues that are unique to school-aged youth, such as childhood obesity, asthma, immunizations against communicable diseases, and child and adolescent mental health disorders. The California Association of School Health Centers sponsors AB 2560.

AB 2569 - K-12 Information Technology Uniform Standards Act of 2006

Declares the intent of the legislature to create uniform digital literacy standards for the K-12 curriculum. The Community Technology Organizing Consortium Category sponsors AB 2569.

AB 2629 - Sex Offender Housing

This measure intends to define "sober living" arrangements in single-family dwellings to prevent these facilities from housing P. C. Section 290 sex offenders in excess of existing law. The 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress potentially sponsors AB 2629.

AB 2829 - Offshore Loophole Closure Act of 2006

Prevents publicly traded U.S. corporations from evading their fair share of California taxes by relocating offshore—in name only—to locales such as Bermuda and the Cayman Islands. AB 2829 is sponsored by State Treasurer Phil Angelides.

AB 2831 - CA Community Development Financial Institutions Tax Credit

Extends the tax credit sunset from January 1, 2007 until January 1, 2017 for financial institutions who invest in community development. It also expands the credit from \$10,000,000 per year to \$25,000,000 per year. Community development financial institutions have as their primary mission community development financing. AB 2831 is sponsored by the Department of Insurance.

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas Hosts Renowned Morehouse Glee Club for Black History Month Cultural Music Performance at L.A. City Hall

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas served as Honorary Chair for a Black History Month Celebration and special musical performance – “Echoes of Excellence: Honoring Our Elders in Song” – by the famed Morehouse College Glee Club on Saturday, February 25, 2006 in the John Ferraro Council Chambers at Los Angeles City Hall. The Morehouse College Glee Club, directed by Dr. David Morrow, was founded in 1911 as the official singing organization of Morehouse College.

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles Superintendent of Schools Roy Romer, Los Angeles Police Chief William Bratton, L.A. County Sheriff Lee Baca, West Angeles Church of God in Christ Bishop Charles E. Blake, First AME Church Senior Pastor Reverend John J. Hunter, Surface Protection Industries Chairman and CEO Robert Davidson, HollyRod Entertainment Co-President Rodney Peete and American Express Western Region Vice President and General Manager Stan Washington co-chaired the event. The Glee Club performance was sponsored locally by the Greater Los Angeles Morehouse Alumni Association, AT&T, SEIU, Comcast, Majestic Realty, State Farm Insurance, American Express, Southern California Edison, Hollyrod Entertainment, Denny's, Semptra Energy and New Century Financial Corporation.



Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas honors Cassandra Marie Roy at a ceremony commemorating her 30 years of dedicated and distinguished service to South L.A. students and families as a teacher at Crenshaw High School in the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD).

Ridley-Thomas Steps Up Fight Against Colorectal Cancer

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas is taking his fight to make more Californians aware of colorectal cancer to a new level with the introduction of Assembly Bill 2339. Mr. Ridley-Thomas' bill establishes a new colorectal cancer detection and treatment program for uninsured and underinsured individuals to be managed by the California Department of Health Services. The American Cancer Society sponsors AB 2339.

Last year, Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas authored the Colorectal Cancer Prevention Fund Act. That measure, AB 819, established a “check off box” on California Income Tax Forms allowing taxpayers to donate a specified amount, in excess of their tax liability, to the California Colorectal Cancer Prevention (CCCP) Fund. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 819 into law in October 2005.

Mr. Ridley-Thomas is waging a health education fight to protect lives and educate the public about the preventability of cancer if early detection, diagnosis and treatment are undertaken. Colorectal Cancer afflicts African Americans more frequently than any other ethnic group in America.

For more information about AB 2339 and ways to support the measure, please contact Ivona Smith at Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas' Capitol Office, (916) 319-2048, or email Ms. Smith at ivona.smith@asm.ca.gov.

IMPORTANT INFO – A statewide conference on colorectal cancer prevention titled “Californians Taking Action to Conquer Colorectal Cancer: A Dialogue for Action” will be held in San Diego, on June 1-2, 2006. For those interested in attending, travel and hotel accommodations are free of charge! For conference registration and program information please visit <http://www.thecdoc.com/>.

Ridley-Thomas Announces Free Income Tax Preparation and Electronic Filing on April 1

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas and the 48th Assembly District Empowerment Congress announced plans for a free four-hour income tax preparation session for individual tax filers on Saturday, April 1, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. co-sponsored by Broad Spectrum Community Development

Corporation, SEIU Local 434-B, Greater Los Angeles Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign Partnership and the County of Los Angeles.

“Nearly everyone needs help filling out their state and federal tax forms these days,” Mr. Ridley-Thomas said. “With the April 17, 2006 tax-filing deadline looming a short time from now, I urge taxpayers to take advantage of the free tax preparation and electronic tax filing assistance.”

The Free Income Tax Preparation and Electronic Tax Filing assistance will take place at 2515 Beverly Boulevard (Los Angeles

90057). Tax filers may schedule an appointment for Saturday, April 1 by calling (310) 693-6530. Drop-ins are also welcome.

“With this free, one-day, four-hour session, tax preparers will be available to help taxpayers answer questions and determine eligibility for Earned Income Tax Credits and Child Care Credits,” Ridley-Thomas added. After filling out tax forms, volunteer tax preparers will be available to submit a tax filer's tax forms electronically to the Internal Revenue Service and state Franchise Tax Board.

State Mental Health Officials Issue \$70 Million in Proposition 63 Mental Health Services Grant Funds to L.A. County

Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas joined Dr. Stephen Mayberg, director of the California Department of Mental Health, L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Dr. Marvin Southard, director of the L.A. County Department of Mental Health



(L-R) L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, MHS Commission Chair Darryl Steinberg, MHS Commissioner Assemblymember Mark Ridley-Thomas, State Department of Mental Health Director Dr. Steve Mayberg, Director of L.A. County of Mental Health Dr. Marvin Southard.

to announce a \$70 million allocation of Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63) funding for the County of Los Angeles. The funds are earmarked for mental health care and mental health treatment services to severely mentally ill residents. The press conference was held at the Los Angeles County Downtown Mental Health Center in the heart of L.A.'s “Skid Row” earlier this month.

Assemblymember Ridley-Thomas is a member of the State's Prop 63 Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.